

REMARKS

This Amendment and Response is responsive to the Office Action mailed November 18, 2004. In that action: the abstract was objected to; claims 6 and 19 were objected to for informalities; claims 1-4, 7-9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 21-24, 27, 28, 31-33, and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Safadi (USPN 5,572,517) in view of Snell, et al. (USPN 5,442,700); claims 5, 6, 13, 14, 25, 26, and 34 were rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Safadi and Snell in view of Ferraro (USPN 5,151,782); claims 10 and 17-20 were rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Safadi and Snell in view of Naboulsi, et al. (USPN 5,805,591); claims 29 and 30 were rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Safadi and Snell in view of Williams (USPN 5,970,386).

The Abstract has been amended to address the objections thereto. All of the amendments to claims 1 and 31 have been made to even further distinguish the claims over the prior art of record. The first, fourth, and fifth amendments to claim 11 and the second, third, and fourth amendments to claim 21 are made for the same reason. The second and third amendments to claim 11, the first amendment to claim 21, and the amendments to claim 6, 9, 10, 14, 18, 19, and 34 are made to correct typographical errors.

New claim 36 is believed to be patentable because of the limitations that the headend composite signal contains a multitude of different channels while a composite user signal produced from the headend composite signal by a signal distribution system contains only a small fraction of the multitude of different channels in the headend composite system, wherein the channels in the composite user signal are those that have been requested by the end user via the customer interface device. It is believed that all of claims 1-36 are now in condition for allowance, and reconsideration of the rejected claims is hereby requested.

Each of the independent claims has been rejected as obvious in light of the combination of Safadi and Snell. Safadi appears to disclose a CATV communication network with a path from the headend to the set-top terminals that has a bandwidth of 1 GHz. The portions below 50 MHz are used for upstream traffic (set-top terminals to the headend) and the portions above 50 MHz are in used for downstream traffic (headend to the set-top terminals) (column 5, line 66 through column 6, line 44). A multitude of different channels is contained in each multiplex, and many multiplexes are sent by the headend down to the set-top terminal. The set-top terminal can then demultiplex the desired multiplex and extract the desired channel.

Similarly, Snell appears to disclose a CATV communication network with a path from the headend to the set-top units. Again, a multitude of different channels is sent by the headend down to the set-top terminal. The set-top terminal can then extract the desired channel.

As amended, each of the independent claims differs from both Safadi and Snell in that between the headend and the customer interface device (such as the set-top box), there is a significant reduction in the number of different channels that are sent downstream. Specifically, in claim 1, a signal distribution system is inserted between the headend system and the customer interface device and the signal distribution system receives a headend composite signal containing a multitude of different channels and produces therefrom a composite user signal that contains only a small fraction of the multitude of different channels in the headend composite signal, wherein the channels in the composite user signal are those that have been requested by the end user via the customer interface device. It is this composite user signal, with the significantly reduced number of different channels, that is provided to the customer interface device.

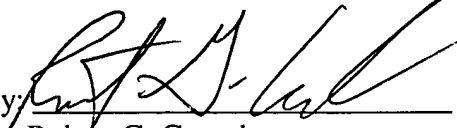
Similarly, in claim 11, between the multimedia reception system and the customer devices, there is a signal distribution system that performs a similar function. Similarly, in claim

21, between the one or more point of presence systems and the customer interface means, there is a signal distribution means that performs a similar function. Similarly, in claim 31, which is a method claim, step (b) includes combining said one or more multimedia information signals into a headend composite signal containing a multitude of different channels. Later, step (f) includes combining said one or more modulated channel signals into a composite user signal that contains only a small fraction of the multitude of different channels in the headend composite signal, wherein the channels in the composite user signal are those that have been requested by the end user. As can be seen, each of the independent claims is clearly distinguishable over Safadi, Snell, or any combination thereof. None of them significantly limit the number of channels sent to the customer interface. For these reasons, is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 11, 21, and 31, and all of the claims dependent thereon (claims 2-10, 12-20, 22-30, and 32-35) are patentable.

Based upon the foregoing, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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